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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 003301

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SUBJECT: GOJ'S RESPONSE TO ALLEGATION OF 1000 MISSING OR
DETAINED JORDANIANS IN IRAQ

REF: AMMAN 003230

Classified By: CDA David Hale for reasons 1.5 (b), (d)

Summary

1. (C) A member of Parliament this week alleged that there are 1000 Jordanians who are either missing or detained in Iraq. The GOJ publicly refuted the number, but the MFA formally requested USG assistance in collecting a list of all Jordanians in CPA or Coalition military custody. End summary.

1000 Missing or Detained in Iraq

2. (U) The Chairman of the Lower House Committee for Public Freedoms and Citizens Rights, Jamal Dmour, this week alleged in the press that around 1000 Jordanians are missing or detained in Iraq. According to press accounts, the committee submitted a petition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urging them to work with authorities in Iraq to get information about the missing or detained. The committee arrived at the 1000 assertion after meeting with several families whose claims of missing sons in Iraq were based on lost contact. The press quoted Dmour as saying that "some families told us that their sons are now at Abu Gharib prison". The press reported that the committee would continue to gather information and follow up the issue with authorities.

GOJ's Response

3. (U) Minister of State and Government Spokesperson Asma Khader told the press April 27, that the number of missing or detained "is much lower than the committee's estimate." Khader said the GOJ was following up on the conditions of between 30 to 35 Jordanians believed to missing or detained in Iraq, and that the GOJ is working with concerned parties and organizations to gather information and determine an exact number.

MFA's response

4. (C) MFA SecGen Rifai raised these allegations with DCM on April 22 noting that Jordan's estimates were far lower--in the 30s. Nonetheless, these charges were creating political difficulties for the government, and the MFA sought U.S. assistance in determining the number of Jordanians held in Iraq. Ali al-Ayad, Foreign Minister Muasher's Private Office Director, harshly criticized the methodology of Dmour's figure in a conversation with PolCouns April 26. The MFA, he said, believes the number of Jordanians detained in Iraq is far lower, although the MFA does not have adequate information to refute Dmour's claims in public. He asked for USG assistance in collecting from the CPA a list of all Jordanians in CPA or Coalition military custody, and as much information as the USG can provide on Jordanians in Iraqi custody (i.e. at Abu Gharib prison). On April 28, the MFA sent an official diplomatic note requesting a full accounting of all detained Jordanian nationals in Iraq including names, locations, and reasons for detention.

Comment

5. (C) Public--if unsubstantiated--allegations that large numbers of Jordanians are in Coalition custody persist. It would be helpful to provide the GOJ with the specifics of all Jordanians held by the Coalition (See Reftel), as well as our best guess of the numbers in Iraqi custody.

6. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

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